

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05
PC-01 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 ACDA-07 /096 W
-----221239 128934 /14

R 221155Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4384
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
COMIDEASTFOR
NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA
NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI
CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0147

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MILI ET

SUBJECT: RECENT MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) ASMARA 0143 (DTG 190825Z FEB 77), (B) ASMARA 0138
(DTG 180550Z FEB 77)

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE ASMARA AREA SHIFTED FROM THE SOUTH
TO THE NORTHWEST. THE FIGHTING AT DEBAROA AND ALONG THE ADI UGRI
ROAD HAS SUBSIDED. THE GARRISON AT DEBAROA REINFORCED, ALTHOUGH
THERE ARE STRONG INSURGENT FORCES IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA (REF A).
THE CONVOY WHICH WAS FORMED FOR ADI UGRI REMAINS IN ASMARA.
LATE REPORTS INDICATE EPMG FORCES ARE BEING ASSEMBLED FOR ANOTHER
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TRY. FIGHTING HAS FLARED AGAIN AT THE ELABARET AGRICULTURAL
ESTATE. DESPITE THE VIRTUALLY TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE FARM,
EPMG FORCES ARE GRIMLY HOLDING THEIR POSITIONS. THE FIGHTING
RENEWED ON FEB 18 AS SEVERAL UNITS OF THE ARMY AND THE COMMANDO
POLICE (CP) BROKE THROUGH INSURGENT ROADBLOCKS AND REINFORCED
THE EPMG TROOPS AT THE FARM. A CP COLONEL NAMED NEGASH WAS REPORT-
EDLY KILLED IN THE FIGHTING. THESE CPS WERE PROBABLY THOSE WHO

WERE AIRLIFTED FROM ADDIS TO KEREN VIA ASMARA EARLIER IN THE MONTH.

2. AS THE EMPHASIS IN THE FIGHTING SHIFTED AWAY FROM THE ADI UGRI ROAD, EPMG AUTHORITIES DECIDED TO AGAIN RESUME THE MASSAWA CONVOYS AFTER A SUSPENSION OF NINE DAYS. THE CONVOY LEFT ASMARA ON FEB 21 AND ARRIVED IN MASSAWA WITHOUT INCIDENT. IT IS EXPECTED TO RETURN FEB 22.

3. ERITREAN RESIDENTS OF ASMARA ARE REVELLING IN RUMORS THAT THE ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES HAVE ARRESTED THEIR OFFICERS AND THAT EPMG MILITARY IS PARALYZED. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE, AS SECOND DIVISION OFFICERS WERE SEEN GOING ABOUT THEIR DUTIES ON FEB 22. FURTHER PROBING REVEALS THAT THE SOURCE OF THE RUMORS IS THE APPARENTLY ACCURATE REPORT OF THE DETENTION OF THE DELEGATION FROM THE PMAC (REF B). THERE IS ANOTHER UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT COL. FIKRU WAS SUMMONED BY THE DIRG TO FLY TO ADDIS, BUT WAS PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY SECOND DIVISION TROOPS. HE WAS SEEN, HOWEVER, AT SECOND DIVISION HQ ON FEB 21. WHILE THIS REPORT DEFIES SUBSTANTIATION, IT IS KNOWN THAT COL. FIKRU HAS BEEN MAINTAINING AN EXCEPTIONALLY LOW PROFILE SINCE THE EVENTS OF FEB 3.

4. COMMENT: THE MOST NOTABLE ELEMENT IN THE RECENT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE REGION IS THE WILLINGNESS OF THE EPMG FORCES TO UNDERTAKE TWO OPERATIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY WHILE CONTEMPLATING THE RESUMPTION OF A THIRD. IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE THE MILITARY WAS WILLING TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN SEVERAL OPERATIONS CONCURRENTLY, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE A RENEWED SENSE OF DETER-

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MINATION AND POSSIBLY A RESOLUTION OF SOME OF THEIR CONFLICTS WITH THE PMAC.
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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 22-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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